

## *The history and present of 'Africa's World War'*

### The 'failure' of the DRC and the militarisation of peace

Speaking in 2010 of the International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy (ISSSS) for the DRC, a MONUSCO officer argued that the escalation of violence in the Kivus over the last few years was caused by the DRC state being 'inexistent' (MONUSCO – ISSSS/STAREC liaison officer 2010). For this MONUSCO representative, some functions of the state did not work properly. So the task of international actors was to operationalise the state towards making 'the police, police, the judiciary, judge ... get the software ... the public servants, pay them!' The image of the DRC as a failed state looms large over policy-making, but also over academic research. This is added to by activist media campaigns that portray the DRC as a place of desperation, war, neglect and tragedy: 'the world's worst country to live in' (War Child 2011), 'a Zaire-shaped hole in the middle of Africa' (The Economist cited in Reno 1998a: 14) and 'the world's largest failed state' (Fisher 2009).

The complexities of the multi-state wars that have taken place since 1996, and the ongoing conflict in the eastern provinces, defy a single causal explanation, although these explanations have been the tendency rather than the exception, as the standard recourse to the failed state shows. An analysis of resistance brings out different aspects of the history and present of the conflict. The war that started in 1996 was seen by popular classes as an opportunity to realise their long-awaited dreams of change. In addition to the multi-state wars, coups and internal military revolts, there was a popular uprising. The violence that is experienced today still shows aspects of those several layers of conflict.

The various forms of resistance linked to how conflict and peacebuilding have affected the everyday lives of popular classes predate the conflict. Looking at the coercive and extractive practices of states writ large, resistance shows that it follows patterns in state–society relations. Resistance also shows the particular configuration the that Congolese state has taken as a result of colonisation, decolonisation and the Cold War. For Schatzberg, this configuration made the

Zairian state 'a congeries of organized repositories of administrative, coercive, and ideological power subject to, and engaged in, an ongoing process of power accumulation characterized by uneven ascension and uneven decline' (1991: 142). It also made state power relative, that is, 'weak to international donors intent on implementing reforms, but massive and overwhelming to the citizenry' (Schatzberg 1991: 142). Neither the colonial Bula Matari and its trinity of state, Church and corporation, nor its post-colonial version, used those repositories for the purpose of producing wealth and infrastructure for the enjoyment of the majority of residents in Congo, Zaire or the later DRC (cf. Turner 2007; Young 1994). Modernity has made the DRC a low-income country that exports copper, petrol and ore at low value and imports refined oil, technology, medicines, iron and meat at high prices (Observatory of Economic Complexity 2014). There is an outward flow of resources and debt repayments, and an inward reception of manufactured goods and aid. Similarly, as will become apparent in the next few chapters, the use of coercion is more effective in repressing dissent than in protecting the population.

In this context, both historically and in the present, popular resistance is not only important but constitutive of political order (Maindo Monga Ngonga 2004; Renton et al. 2007; Young 1994: Ch. 1). In the context of the present war, popular classes have been exposed to new demands of the global market, changes in security interests in Africa at the end of the Cold War and the reconfiguration of the global security agenda. So, while the war has transformed the political and economic landscape, thereby directly impacting on livelihoods, significant sections of the popular urban and rural classes have turned the war into an opportunity for revolt. Although identity and belonging have marked the discourses of rural militias, these are underpinned by long-term political aspirations: dignified living through the enjoyment of their own resources and participation in political decision-making on an equal basis.

The peacebuilding strategies of different national and international actors have consolidated a militarised extractive context of plural authorities. Alongside the already militarised environment caused by the wars of 1996 and 1998, both North and South Kivu have been targets of unilateral UN and UN-backed military operations of the DRC and Rwanda against remaining armed groups. This is in addition to continuous proxy wars between the DRC and Rwanda, which both cooperate and antagonise at multiple levels, and a corresponding mushrooming of popular Mai Mai militias. Militarisation has also followed from the tendency to deploy the military as representatives of state authority and as the administrators of certain mines in the eastern territories. Beyond Eastern DRC, the rivalries and alliances between countries seen during the wars have continued, particularly those between Angola, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. Nyaxo Olympio summarises these dynamics well when saying that

regional politics, reaching from the Great Lakes region to Angola and the Southern cone, have become relations of posturing, antagonisms and vendettas, more so than relations of cooperation and peaceful resolution (2013: 466). Resistance in this context is targeted towards the conditions of living that result from these historical and present issues, and is a continuation of the long-term aspirations of Congolese subordinate classes.

Whereas the next chapters focus on the different resistance strategies, this chapter provides the basis for understanding the context of peacebuilding in the DRC. First, it will analyse the major accounts of the DRC conflict as they have affected peacebuilding policy. Second, it will provide a general background of the Congo wars since 1996 to observe distinctive features that remain today. Third, the chapter analyses the UN strategies used in the DRC since the UN's deployment.

### **The sources of conflict and the role of resistance**

The complexities developed during two decades of war and peacebuilding in the DRC mean that state and non-state actors alike are engaged in processes of authority assertion, war and accumulation. The few accounts on resistance provide detailed and historically grounded analyses but have not theorised resistance itself. Rather, they have captured the responses of Congolese people to the imposition of war conditions and domination from different perspectives: the informal arena as a source of alternative economic and political arrangements (De Goede 2012; Mac Gaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000); the Mai Mai militias in Eastern Congo (Acker and Vlassenroot 2001; Vlassenroot 2002); DIY strategies to provide social services and survival (Trefon 2004b); and the historical perspective, covering from the colonial period until the present (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002; Renton et al. 2007). These analyses provide a sense of the historical and present political activity of Congolese non-elites, illustrating that people's responses to deteriorating living conditions can be seen as patterns of actions that attempt to transform or evade the social order.

The absence of a theorisation of resistance from the peacebuilding context of the DRC does not stem from the lack of resistance but, rather, from the accounts that have been given of the conflict itself. Three of these accounts stand out. On the one hand, focusing on the motivations for war, is the resource wars thesis. On the other hand are two approaches that focus on the actors involved: *localist* and *regionalist*. With the spectre of the failed state underpinning all of them and the absence of a broad political movement, these analyses examine the actions of subordinate groups, both as victims and as co-producers of a context of domination, plunder and violence, thereby undermining important political implications.

*The resource wars thesis*

The resource wars thesis has driven mainstream academic, policy and activist research. Though disputed, the DRC has been one of the paradigmatic cases used to argue that the access and commercialisation of natural resources fuels and protracts conflict.<sup>1</sup> UN strategy in the DRC has, until now, followed this thesis. A series of high-level reports have consistently linked resource exploitation and the continuation of wars (UN Group of Experts 2015b).<sup>2</sup> The thesis has applied to the first period of inter-state war, as its cause, and to the continuation of conflict in Eastern DRC. Although this thesis undermines the political motivations for war, it rightly identifies exploitation and accumulation as important dynamics for conflict. For instance, between 1998 and 2002, US\$5 billion worth of state assets from the mining sector (especially diamonds, cobalt, copper and germanium) were transferred to private companies under Zimbabwean control with no compensation paid to the DRC treasury (UN Panel of Experts 2001: 7). Eighty per cent of Rwanda's military expenses (about US\$320 million) were financed by the Congolese spoils (UN Panel of Experts 2001: 15). Although Uganda does not produce gold, gold exports became its second-largest income source (Clark 2002b: 152). In recent years, mining has become Rwanda's 'largest foreign exchange earner', with up to 30 per cent of these earnings coming from illegal mining in Congo (Stearns 2012a: 57). Groups such as the FDLR and several Mai Mai groups have continued to operate, thanks to resource trafficking and their occupation of mines.

Despite the wide embracement of this thesis, implementation of policy has been slow and inconsistent, especially when applying sanctions and prohibitions on neighbouring countries and large corporations. The Kimberley Process, although a significant step towards eliminating illegal trade of diamonds, has been dubbed 'toothless' and is said to continue to exist 'in name only' (Elving 2012: 10–11; Harvey 2009: para. 4). Instead of the sanctions and embargoes against Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi that the final report of the UN Panel on Illegal Exploitation suggested imposing, the World Bank and the IMF granted Rwanda and Uganda debt-reduction benefits due to their good economic performances (UN Panel of Experts 2001: 38–9).

The resource wars thesis has informed UN policy towards statebuilding, reflecting not only the vision of the DRC as failed but also the influence of neo-liberal understandings of how states and their economies should work. Neo-liberal approaches to statebuilding have called for contradictory approaches. They have pursued a policy of rebuilding the state while deregulating its industries, delinking forms of economic control from the central apparatus of the state and fostering market self-regulation. For example, mining management has been carried out through several attempts to formalise private control

(Kuditshini 2008).<sup>3</sup> The reliance on private actors means that, despite the shaming and finger-pointing contained in these reports, some sensitive material was removed from the final report and few judicial procedures have been started (Johnson and Kayser 2005: 146). Moreover, some of the companies, governments and individuals that these reports accused of fuelling the conflict have continued to work, if not in direct government positions, as forms of subcontracted authorities in parts of the territory.<sup>4</sup>

This lax approach has changed since about 2010, encouraged by activist and policy endorsements (Bafilemba, Lezhnev, and Zingg Wimmer 2012; BBC 2010; Global Witness 2011; The Enough Project Team and Grassroots Reconciliation Group 2009; UN Group of Experts 2010a). The OECD guidelines and the Dodd-Frank Act of the US, whereby companies have to publicly disclose their mining sources, have made an impact on the mining dynamics of the DRC, with ambiguous results (OECD 2012; US Congress 2010). While establishing mechanisms for the tracing of resources, they have also pushed many investors out of the DRC, impacting on thousands who depend on mining for a living (Cuvelier, Van Bockstael et al. 2014). The impact on conflict has been limited as armed groups have other sources of funding such as taxation, robbery, support from the civilian population and contributions from the diaspora.<sup>5</sup>

While the resource wars thesis unearths important dynamics of conflict in the DRC, it portrays practices of accumulation as a criminal rather than a political undertaking. It taps into the image of the DRC as a neopatrimonial failed state, immersed in a Hobbesian state of nature, where armed actors do not have political motivations or values (Autesserre 2010: 72–3; Wai 2014: 144–5). Something that the resource wars thesis does not point out is that, as Johnson and Kayser note, informal exchanges and trafficking are part of a longer trend of bypassing state regulations, of confronting poverty and of building local influence (2005: 169). Many have noted that merchant elites who are part of larger networks succeed in providing the community with much-needed resources outside of state channels (Kabamba 2011; Mac Gaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000; Raeymaekers et al. 2008; Titeca and De Herdt 2011; Tull 2003). These practices may have fuelled the continuation of war and may not have fostered industry. However, they have made the DRC and other neighbouring countries' economies grow (Bayart 1998; Straus and Waldorf 2011). Additionally, as the *localists* and *regionalists* have argued, the resource wars thesis neglects important identity, political and security concerns that go hand in hand with economic motivations. These criticisms have resonated strongly in the most recent policy strategies, to the point of embracing them (Day and Ayet Puigarnau 2013; Framework Agreement 2013; ISSSS 2013; UN Security Council 2015). Yet, as seen below, this has not helped substantially in leading to a political solution to the conflict.

*Localists*

Localists argue that sources of conflict are rooted in local dynamics regarding belonging and access to power and land, which long predate the conflict itself. There is a broad spectrum between those who see violence in Congo as a pre-colonial issue (Bøås 2010) and those who see historical and localised dynamics to be disrupting national and regional ones (Autesserre 2010; Lemarchand 2003; Reyntjens 2009). Séverine Autesserre (2010) is a primary representative arguing that violence in the Kivus is the consequence of issues of migration, claims of citizenship and belonging and land disputes since the 1930s. The problem with the peacebuilding strategies is that they have been aimed only at national and regional levels, ignoring the local dimensions.

Autesserre rightly warns against the depoliticisation of villagers, chiefs and local administrators and seeing them as simple followers manipulated by national or regional elites. She offers a detailed account of political and ethnic agendas that operate autonomously and that end up causing or fuelling conflicts at national and regional levels. She also highlights the importance of historical events in shaping the present DRC. Yet, in so doing her account reveals several other limitations. Autesserre evades history by tracing an unchanging continuous line between the 1930s and today. The 'locals' and 'the local level' become, in her account, a homogenous sphere of individuals whose only differentiation is their ethnic identity. This way of defining the local not only sees 'ethnic' identities as rigid and prominent when they are not, it also ignores the enormous complexity of identities and relations based on class, gender and age.

From here, several important aspects of the causes of conflict and the historicity of the DRC are undermined. The period between 1914 and the 1930s was characterised initially by World War I and later by an economic crisis that affected most colonial powers. Tax extraction increased 400 per cent between 1917 and 1924, and an increasing number of peasants were forced into cotton cultivation (Bézy, Peemans, and Wautelet 1981: 35–45; Davidson, Isaacman, and Péliesser 1985: 690). Some of the most famous peasant revolts and religious-political movements took place during this period, including that of Simon Kimbangu. In rural areas of the Kivus, the Kitawala movement had taken root, threatening to kill Europeans and African allies (loyalist chiefs in particular) in its quest for an 'Africa for the Africans' and 'equality of races' (Davidson et al. 1985: 692). The economic crisis endured as most parts of the world were at war just over a decade later. This crisis again produced revolts in the colonies against the increase of taxes and conscription. The DRC saw, for instance, the Manono and Masisi revolts and the Luluaborg mutiny in 1944 (Emoungu 1986: 168; Mazrui 1993: 195).

The dual system of accessing land, based on administrative and customary law, has remained in place until the present time, not just until the 1990s

(Autesserre 2010: 130). If property is in question, whoever has the land title is recognised as the owner. Mere belonging to an ethnic community is not a guarantee of access to land: the chief needs to grant access, and for this to happen personal and village politics come into play. When Belgium took control of the Congo from Leopold II, the political and economic basis of authority in the DRC changed from a slavery system to one of waged labour (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1985: 356–8). Subsistence farming has existed in parallel with cash-crops ever since as a marginal low-income activity, increasingly dependent on farmers being able to rent rather than own land. This is a feature not just of the way the Belgian colonial administration dealt with the distribution of wealth and rights, but also of the particular value of exchanges in the global market.

The violence of the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s analysed by Autesserre needs to be understood beyond the scope of ethnicity. In the 1960s, revolts in Kwilu, South Kivu and Northern Katanga took place as a result of the assassination of Lumumba and the secession of Katanga (Renton et al. 2007: 116). The Mulele rebellion in 1964 lasted about a year and took control of 40 per cent of the territory, with Bunia and Fizi being two of the last territories to resist the advance of the army (De Witte 2001: 163). According to Ludo De Witte, conservative estimates of the number of people killed in the rebellion and the subsequent repression were 'about 300 whites and more than 200,000 Congolese' (Marlair cited in De Witte 2001: 164). For the next 30 years or more this movement was continued by Mulele allies such as Laurent Desirée Kabila, resulting in considerable violence by Kabila's Parti Revolutionnaire du Peuple (PRP) and the Government.

The 1980s were marked by continuous violent opposition to Mobutu, violent repression of dissent and an incipient organisation of non-violent opposition with Etienne Tshisekedi (Ndaywel è Nziem 2011: 253–62; Schatzberg 1991: 58). These dynamics continued into the early 1990s, a period of time also characterised by the effects of the dismantling of state and economy as carried out by Mobutu and the SAPs. In addition to the kleptocratic enterprise of Mobutu, who went into exile with a US\$5 billion fortune but left the country bankrupt, the SAPs made all aid and debt rescheduling conditional on state withdrawal from public services and investments, the elimination of subsidies and the liberalisation of trade (Devarajan, Dollar, and Holmgren 2001; Moyo 2009: 48). The result was exacerbated poverty. In Zaire, the 1991 pillages extended throughout the country. Rank and file soldiers, who were paid US\$1 per month, started looting and a revolt ensued. They were joined by others in the population, many of whom had just been scammed after putting their savings into financial pyramid schemes as last attempts to access money (Marriage 2013: 22). The looters destroyed public and private property and infrastructure throughout the country, and the pillages dilapidated an already damaged economy. "There was an estimated US\$1 billion worth of damage in

the first 72 hours' (Ransdell cited in Marriage 2013: 23). Zaire's GDP fell by 30 per cent, unemployment went up to 80 per cent, companies like Gecamines fell in their GDP contribution to 0 per cent by 1992 and public sector workers went on strike (Human Rights Watch 1993: "Zaire" para. 4; Marriage 2013: 25). This violence, and that of mid-1996, was exacerbated by the fact that much leftover stock from the Cold War went to Zaire (Hartung and Moix 2000). For Marriage, the pillages represent a *conflict between the leadership and the population*, which 'crystallised' identity conflicts (2013: 28). This does not mean that the conflicts over land, power and citizenship started here, but that analyses of conflicts over land, power and citizenship need to take these other factors into account.

Ethnic identities are not rigid, nor are they historically unchanged.<sup>6</sup> Willame argues that identity, in the way that it has played out in the Kivus, is something from the democratisation period (1997: 62–8). For Kankwenda, although the institutionalisation of ethnic identities arrived with the Belgians, the post-colonial period amplified it (2005: 279). As ethnic groups became more entrenched, they became a way to access political and economic goods and a strategic form of defence, resistance and refuge, but not the only one (Kankwenda 2005: 288). The system of predation in the DRC includes an ethnic dimension alongside two other elements. Socially, it is also sustained by the *intelligentsia congolaise*, that is, an informal social body that seals the system with a rubber stamp of technical knowledge, moral authority, notoriety and social prestige. It is also sustained by the alliances made externally between individuals, institutions, corporations and groups (Kankwenda 2005: 280).

The ethnic aspect is a receptacle for multiple political, economic and social identities that primarily worked to simplify the administration of the colony (Vansina 1966). Hutus and Tutsis, for instance, were not originally ethnic identities but designated socio-economic classes (Vansina 2004: 134–9). The ethnic divisions created by the Belgians were imposed, generating resistance and conflict not only towards the Belgians but also towards those seen as their allies (Kankwenda 2005: 282–4). Pre-existing identities were not fixed. They had as much to do with parental ties and birth locations as with different social networks such as religious, mystical, political and economic. These changed simultaneously, depending on whether or not they had been subjected to a kingdom or an empire (e.g., Rwanda and Buganda kingdoms or the Kongo, Luba and Lunda empires) and whether or not they were subjected to a tribute or slavery system (Kankwenda 2005: 283–5; Muiu and Martin 2009: Ch. 6; Vansina 1966: 118–19). Importantly, not all of these identities had to do with access to land and power; they also had to do with norms, customs and roles within different groups and were not all territorially linked. Additionally, it would be wrong to see ethnic divisions only in terms of animosities or as clear cut. The

long history of the DRC, including the pre-colonial period, is defined by cohabitation (Vansina 1966).

Lastly, the separation of the local from the national and regional is an artificial device that resembles the resource war thesis from the bottom up. The politics of villagers in the localist version seem to be confined to the access of land and political power. From this view, the history of revolt for social change and the constraints imposed by the global economy are out of the picture. Yet land and power are inextricably linked to the global market and to notions of social justice.

Localists ultimately portray the image of a violent inside that disrupts a more pacified outside, remaining within a framework in which the right kind of interveners with the right kind of sensitivity could apply policies that would build the right kind of state. But, as seen in previous chapters, and as will be observed in later ones, any state is the outcome of the *entanglement* between the global and the local. This is visible once again in the present peacebuilding process. At the local level, it is possible to find actors as disparate as the UN, the military, a corporation or an externally backed armed group playing state-like roles in the absence of an administrative state-based authority. These actors contribute either directly or indirectly to practices of coercion and extraction, and only very limitedly to the realisation of the liberal state of peacebuilding policies. Armed militias may be linked to particular ethnic groups, but this does not reduce the conflict to land or to an ethnic conflict. The fluidity of other identities, the diversity of power relations, the history of the struggle for better conditions of living and the dynamics of the global economy impinge on the local context and are necessary elements for understanding the conflict.

### *Regionalists*

It is this greater set of elements that regionalists capture. Most regionalists do not disregard the local features intervening in the continuation of conflict. What they argue is that the dynamics in the DRC are linked to the dynamics of the Great Lakes region. In this view, it is not just state actors like Rwanda and Uganda who have affected the development of events, but also their interconnections with their corresponding diasporas in each country, their common and conflicting commercial interests, their links to non-state actors, including armed groups, as well as their common security threats. Regionalists also consider other factors that have to do with global politics, the global economy and social hierarchies (Ndaywel è Nziem 1998; Prunier 2009; Raeymaekers 2014; Vlasenroot and Raeymaekers 2004a).

A vivid example of the differences between regionalists and localists has been exposed by Jason Stearns's criticism of an article published by Séverine

Autesserre in the *New York Times*. The journal piece summarises the arguments Autesserre has made over the last 10 years:

The international community has failed to help Congo achieve peace and security because it fundamentally misunderstands the causes of the violence [–] distinctively local conflicts over land, grassroots power, status and resources, like cattle, charcoal, timber, drugs and fees levied at checkpoints. Most of the violence in Congo is not coordinated on a large scale. It is the product of conflicts among fragmented local militias, each trying to advance its own agenda at the village or district level. Those then percolate and expand. (2012b: para. 7)

Jason Stearns responded with the following:

While [Autesserre] is right to emphasize the local dynamics of conflict, her argument is flawed. She falls victim of her own critique: she, too, ends up being overly reductive, failing to account for the different kinds of armed actors, each with its unique underlying dynamic, in the Eastern Congo. In fact, reading her op-ed, one might think that the reason for the uptick in violence in the Kivus this year is due to land conflicts and struggles for power at the village level. But the main protagonists since the beginning of the transition in 2003 have not been fragmented local militia with parochial concerns, but rather armed groups that are tightly linked to regional political and business elites, such as the CNDP, PARECO, and, most recently, the M-23. (2012c: para. 4)

In developing his response, Stearns gives a brief background of the CNDP, which, as he notes, was formed 'by senior members of the RCD [Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie] military, in coordination with officials in Kigali and Goma' to safeguard their interests (2012c: para. 6; see also: Stearns 2008; UN Group of Experts 2012b: para. 103–7). Even when local grievances about land are at the root of certain armed groups, Stearns argues that they 'have since become integrated into regional business and political networks' (Stearns 2012c: para. 9; see also: Sylla 2010). Regionalists provide a moderate argument that includes regional transborder dynamics, the impact of donor policies and internal dynamics, without considering them solely as a Congolese transhistorical affair (Stearns 2013a). There are important differences amongst regionalists, depending on whether the emphasis is put on the role of external countries, even if from the region, or on the internal factors of the DRC as a failed state.<sup>7</sup> For instance, Nzongola Ntalaja speaks of factors of instability in the region, of which state weakness is paramount (2002: 214). Turner affirms that both the 1996 and 1998 wars were the work of Rwanda, with involvement of different regional and continental actors, but the underlying factors of the war are a combination of state failure, cultural and socio-economic issues and the political economy of the DRC (2007: 17–19). The regionalist account highlights the need to problematise local–global relations and societal divides among elites and non-elites. The regionalist account suffers, however, from maintaining the paradigm of the

neopatrimonial failed state and from not linking the dynamics of the region with the general patterns of state behaviour and with the constraints of the global economic order.

An exploration of resistance precisely takes this complexity into account, considering the different levels on which actors operate and seeing local and global, present and history as co-constituted. The analyses explored above also underline that a lack of more organised movements is seen as an absence of resistance; instead, state failure, ethnic alliances, patronage and self-seeking individuals are seen as the main causes of conflict. Yet, neither patronage nor the figure of the failed state illustrates how political authority is exercised. Ethnicity is just one element among many identities and factors that impact on conflict. Additionally, as will be shown in the next chapters, these factors impact on resistance but they do not define it.

### **Landmarks of a multi-layered conflict**

In spite of the complex dynamics of conflict and the long history of structural and physical violence in the DRC, it is helpful to retain a basic chronology of the actual conflict. This can be divided into three phases. First, a period of large-scale war from 1996 until 2003; second, a period of transition between 2003 and 2006, ending with the first democratic elections since independence; and third, a decade of cyclical conflict localised mainly in the eastern part of the territory. Every time conflict has erupted during this last decade there has been a similar response: a process of negotiation, mainly based on reintegration and disarmament – but not followed by either party – and a military response generally involving the FARDC, the UN and the Rwandan army. DRC–Rwandan relations have also marked this last period as they have engaged in mutual instrumentalisations and confrontations through proxy wars, which have carried the mark of both countries' statebuilding projects. Although Jason Stearns and Christopher Vogel argue that since the M-23 defeat and later changes in the FARDC Rwanda has lost most of its military allies and there has been a decline in the regional dimension of the conflict, these dynamics are likely to continue (2015: 5).

#### *Multi-state war and revolt in the first large confrontations (1996–2003)*

The immediate context of war, resistance, state-making and peacebuilding in the DRC has been marked by four events: the ousting of Mobutu, which suffocated an important democratic movement; the Rwandan genocide; the AFDL (l'Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo) war of 1996–97; and the RCD rebellion, which turned into 'Africa's First World War' (1998–2003). These four events have created a militarised extractive context of

plural authorities, which explains why resistance generally takes both a covert and a militarised form.

The first event was the 'elbowing' out of Mobutu (Erlanger 1997: 15). The choice of a military solution was underpinned by a series of factors related to the end of the Cold War, a serious crisis in Zaire and the Rwandan genocide (Young 2002). The Rwandan-initiated military campaign in 1996 gathered regional and international support, but suffocated a democratic movement (Pomfret 1997). The efforts of thousands of civil society organisations, dissident parliamentarians and political parties long opposed to Mobutu culminated in the 1992 Conference for National Sovereignty (CNS) (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002: 171). This was a conference of over 2,000 delegates representing opposition parties and a plethora of civil society organisations, which managed to appoint a new government.<sup>8</sup> However, Mobutu's coup three months later and the 1996 international campaign against him meant the ushering in of a new authoritarian regime and the loss of the more vocal and formally organised resistance.

The second event was the spilling-over of the Rwandan genocide into the DRC. The Rwandan genocide needs to be understood in two stages: the first, in which the Hutu Interahamwe killed up to 800,000 Tutsis, Twa and moderate Hutus in Rwanda and the Congolese aftermath; and a second, in which the Tutsi-led AFDL along with the APR (Armée Patriotique Rwandaise) killed 300,000 Hutu refugees, militias and civilians during the 1996–97 military campaign in the DRC (Young 2002: 13–14). As such, its effects were regional, not only as an ignition factor for the Congo Wars, but also as an impact on how politics and war in the Great Lakes region began to be determined by a pro-anti-Kagame—Tutsi division (Prunier 2009: xxxi; Stearns 2011: 8). Since then, the genocide has marked Rwanda's need for security in Eastern DRC, in addition to its economic agendas. For Rwanda, the fulfilment of these security and economic agendas largely depends on intervening in the DRC. Yet the two wars that Rwanda has led in the DRC have both bolstered and endangered Rwanda's interests.

The third and fourth events were the two complex, multi-state wars of 1996 (AFDL/APR war) and 1998 (RCD War) or war of liberation and war of aggression, as Ndaywel è Nziem prefers to call them (2011: 268–72). The full-blown militarisation that these two conflicts provoked was due not just to the circumstances of inter-state war, but also to the fact that civilians were extensively targeted and engaged in the war effort. The AFDL campaign was aimed at: (1) dismantling the refugee camps where Interahamwe genocidaires from Rwanda were living, to prevent them reorganising; and (2) ousting Mobutu, who had become a source of insecurity in the region.<sup>9</sup> The campaign had US support, but also crucial to its success were the interventions of Angola and France and the mobilisation of Mai Mai militias and factions of the Congolese military.

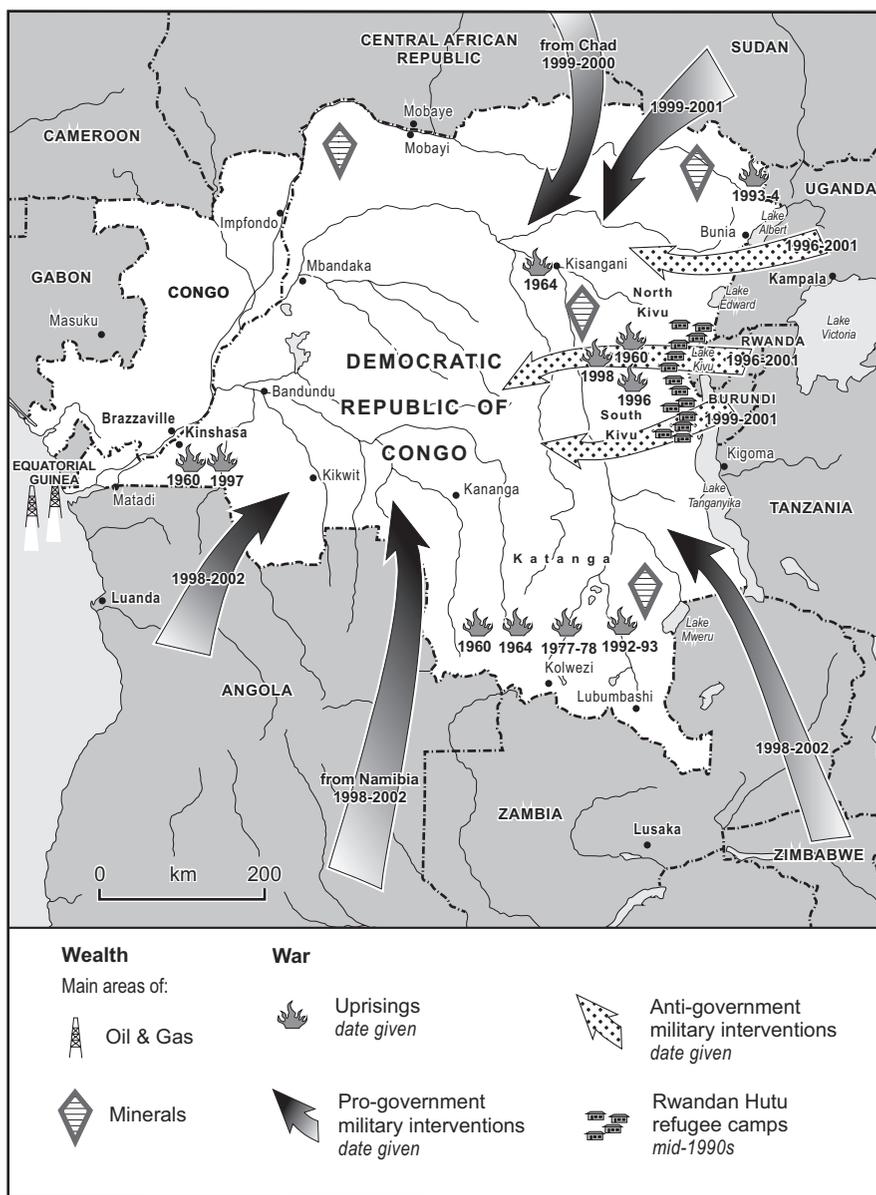
The RCD war began as a US-backed Rwandan–Ugandan–Burundian effort to oust Laurent Desirée Kabila, allied to an internal movement called the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD). It then encountered the response of the Angolan, Namibian, Chad, Zimbabwean armies and Mai Mai militias. These militias sided with Laurent Desirée Kabila because they had a historical and ideological connection with him as a revolutionary figure.<sup>10</sup> They also responded out of nationalist sentiment to what they saw as an invasion. The Map 3.1 provides an orientation to the complex system of alliances in the region.

This map does not include the broader international alliances. Aside from the already mentioned US support of the Rwandan-led coalition, Chad and the CAR supported Kabila with the help of France, Namibia and Sudan and with Libyan aid (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002: 240; Scherrer 2002: 255). In the east, it was the Mai Mai militias, mainly those of General Dunia and General Padiri, which were able to contain the actions of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. Despite this, Mai Mai representation was subsequently undermined in the peace negotiations. This has created resentment amongst those who fought for Kabila, and after various failed DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration of national armed groups) attempts many have rejoined the Mai Mai militias.

The dynamics of foreign occupation, the involvement of popular classes in the conflict and different conflict management solutions have created what Ndaywel calls a 'giant octopus' (2011: 282). The significance of these four events goes beyond a dynamic of war and state-making. They combine genocide, the toppling of Mobutu's dictatorship and two multi-state wars, with one of the highest civilian death tolls since World War II.<sup>11</sup> A common pattern has been the conquest of territory, typically through raids, and the usual response of civilians has been flight (Pillay 2010: Ch. 2; Redress 2006: 20–2).<sup>12</sup> However, this has also been a main reason for people to engage in war, making civilians rely on their own devices for protection. Additionally, the AFDL and the RCD wars, which were brought under the rubric of national liberation, first against Mobutu and then against Laurent Desirée Kabila, have also been factors in funneling political aspirations through the participation in war.

### *Violent transition (2003–6)*

The transition brought significant hope, especially around the ratification of the new constitution and, in 2006, the first democratic elections since independence. But it also consolidated the positions of the strongest actors and was marred by violent episodes. The more meaningful peace agreement was achieved in Sun City (South Africa) in 2002. Earlier, the Lusaka peace agreement of 1999, signed at the instance of the AU, Zambia and South Africa in particular, and of the UN Secretary General, from which the UN authorised MONUC, just



Map 3.1 Regional alliances and interventions in the DRC wars of 1996 and 1998  
Source: Smith (2003: 91)

'froze the armies in their positions, but did not stop the fighting' (ICG 2000: iii). It was not until the assassination of Laurent Kabila in January 2001, when his son Joseph Kabila took his place, that the different warring parties felt a renewed stimulus for negotiation.<sup>13</sup> Shortly after, Joseph Kabila met Rwandan president Kagame in Washington and, within days, Rwanda, Uganda and some rebel groups agreed to a UN-backed withdrawal.

The Sun City peace agreement managed to reunite the country, establish a transitional government, expel most foreign parties and pacify the western part of the country. It was also the first agreement to see the realisation of an Inter-Congolese Dialogue. However, despite the fact that from this agreement onwards the DRC was officially dubbed a 'post-conflict context', conflict has continued, leaving a situation of 'formal peace and informal war' (Marriage 2013). The transitional government formula of 1+4 placed Joseph Kabila as president, supported by four vice-presidents, each representing one of the warring parties: RCD, Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC), the Government and the opposition.<sup>14</sup> The main hierarchy of the newly created FARDC was also made up of representatives of these parties. As Ahamed notes, the UN and EU's strategy of peace from very early on was one of sustaining warlords (2006: 288). Despite the participation of over 360 organisations and historical opposition parties in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, the agreement was largely a settlement amongst armed men, leaving the civil society as a passive spectator (Hoebeke 2006).

During the transition, other significant conflicts took place. In the Ituri district, violence between the Hema and Lendu communities had begun in 1999, and by 2003 fears of a possible genocide prompted the first ever EU-led peacekeeping operation outside Europe (European Union 2003; Fahey 2011; Veit 2008; Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004b). Between 2006 and 2007 post-electoral violence took the lives of 300 people (MONUC Human Rights Division and OCHA 2007). Some significant events were the clashes between Kabila's Republican Guard and MLC supporters in Kinshasa in August 2006 and March 2007 and the shooting of Bundu dia Kongo followers in several towns of Bas-Congo. Additionally, the formation of the CNDP and the FDLR signalled that the main political stakes in the conflict were still largely unresolved.

### *Cyclical conflict and repetitive responses (2006–16)*

The decade following the 2006 elections has been marked by three dynamics feeding back into cyclical conflicts. The protagonists have been Rwandan-backed armed groups (CNDP/M-23); the Mai Mai militias, which mushroomed around the failure of the first significant demobilisation process in 2007; the FDLR; the Government; and the FARDC. The first dynamic is the confrontation/

instrumentalisation between the DRC and Rwanda, which has fuelled the creation and maintenance of armed groups fighting proxy wars for economic, political and security gains. The second and third dynamics go together as they form the pattern of responses addressing the conflicts. One is the repeated shallow and uncommitted negotiations; the other is a reliance on military means. The post-transition period, which needed to consolidate state authority and peace, has, rather, pluralised state authority, and in the eastern provinces has seen an increasingly militarised environment. In order to better understand this complex decade, this section examines the three dynamics separately.

*DRC–Rwanda instrumentalisations and confrontations*

One source of the sour relations between Rwanda and the DRC has been the FDLR. Ever since the AFDL war in 1996 Rwanda has claimed that a weak DRC is a threat to its security, providing refuge to dissident FDLR-Interahamwe (Braeckman 2012; Clark 2002a; Pomfret 1997). The FDLR is a group created in 2000 from Rwanda's ex-army officials, members of the Habyarimana Government and the old Rwandan Hutu-dominated Interahamwe militias that crossed the border into Zaire at the time of the Rwandan genocide. Although it states its ultimate aim to be the ousting of Kagame and the re-establishment of a plural and social government in Rwanda, its presence and evolution in the DRC relates to a series of complex factors. Despite its fears of being tried in Rwanda for crimes of genocide, during its almost 20 years in the DRC it has managed to establish rule in many areas, formed families and created a series of military and commercial networks with the DRC Government, the FARDC and some Mai Mai militias (Group Jeremie Representative 2 2010; Hege 2009). In several locations in North and South Kivu it has been in symbiosis with the FARDC to exploit mines (UN Group of Experts 2005: para.158–169; Global Witness 2010a). For the populations of South Kivu and Shabunda in particular, the fact that a self-defence group (Raïa Mutomboki) has been able to expel the FDLR is evidence that neither the DRC, nor Rwanda, nor the diplomatic community present in the DRC has a real commitment to stopping it.

In its 20 years in the DRC, the FDLR has not only consolidated its standing as a destabilising factor, accused of committing atrocities against the civilian population, but has also consolidated its standing as an exchange currency in the DRC–Rwanda relations. The DRC has used it to confront and maintain leverage against Rwanda. Observers note that the problem of the FDLR may be overstated, facilitating a justification for intervening politically and militarily in the DRC in pursuit of other agendas (Autesserre 2006: 6–7; Lemarchand 2009: 275–6; Prunier 2009: 322; UN Group of Experts 2002: para. 69). Although this group once claimed to represent the legitimate Rwandan Government and numbered 20,000 troops, today the threat that it represents to Rwanda is more political than military, as it has only about 1,500 members (ICG 2003: 5; UN

Group of Experts 2015a: para.47). The presence of the FDLR has underpinned the justifications for the two main revolts of the post-transition period, supported by Rwanda (UN Group of Experts 2004: paras 65–7; 2005: paras 185–6; Stearns 2012a; UN Group of Experts 2012a, 2012b). One was led by the CNDP and the other by the M-23, taking place in the two post-electoral periods of 2007 and 2012, respectively.

The CNDP was created in 2006 by General Nkunda and several other renegades after a failed reintegration process.<sup>15</sup> It claimed the need to protect the Tutsi population against the FDLR and to guarantee their access to land and political participation. General Nkunda, who had already fought under the APR and RCD in 1996 and 1998, became the perfect solution for Rwanda to maintain a political, military and economic influence in the Kivus, and Rwanda's support afforded him the capacity to rise as a defender of the Tutsi community (Prunier 2009: 322). As a charismatic, university-educated evangelical pastor and military leader with a national discourse for the defence of minorities, Nkunda gathered as much popular as elite support, especially from within his Tutsi community of Rutshuru and Masisi (Mazanza Kindulu and Nlandu Tsasa 2009: 200; Prunier 2009: 323). This support and Nkunda's own personality reflect that he was no pawn operating within anyone else's agenda. Additionally, portions of the DRC Government have also supported Nkunda. For instance, Vice-President Ruberwa and Governor Serufuli supplied arms (Stearns 2008: 248; US Ambassador Haykin 2009). Public support in Masisi and Rutshuru, linked to the network of elite alliances that go as far as Kigali, made Nkunda both a threat and a necessary ally for the DRC Government.

Nkunda had been operating a parallel administration in Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyirangongo (three territories of the North Kivu province) since 2004. This entailed a parallel decision-making structure, parallel police, a parallel army and different regimes of labour and taxation. The formal launch of the CNDP comprised several thousand troops. This strength was seen in the violent attacks they were able to carry out. In 2004, General Nkunda and General Mutebusi attacked Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu, which was host to one of the largest MONUC deployments in DRC. Claiming to stop the genocide against the Banyamulengue, they subjected Bukavu's residents to systematic crimes against humanity for a week (Zeebroek 2008: 9). The most destabilising of these attacks came in the post-election period between 2006 and 2007, when a series of clashes between the CNDP, the FDLR, Mai Mai militias and the Government threatened to tear apart the transition. As observed below, the agreements reached in order for this violence to cease were the cause, six years later, of the CNDP transforming into the M-23 and of one of the most severe crises in the post-transition period.

The second CNDP uprising, under the name of M-23, followed a similar path. After elections in 2012, Bosco Ntaganda (instead of General Nkunda), led

a movement of desertion within the army, taking command in several territories in North Kivu (Masisi and Rutshuru) and seizing the town of Goma in November 2012.<sup>16</sup> The responses to this uprising were familiar. Rwanda and Uganda denied any involvement, while UN and Human Rights Watch reports argued the opposite (Human Rights Watch 2012; Rwandan Foreign Affairs Ministry 2012; UN Group of Experts 2012a). The DRC Government entered into discussions with Angola to secure support in case of a full-on invasion by these governments (Radio Okapi 2009). Up to 650,000 people were displaced, war crimes were reported and Kabila called on the population to attend to the 'obligation to resist the imposition of war [and] for everyone to participate in the defence of the national sovereignty'.<sup>17</sup> Several armed groups were formed as a popular response to this uprising. Some of these were attached to the DRC and neighbouring governments, others were part of the ongoing popular response to the constant instability of the preceding decade. The official responses from the DRC Government and the UN, aiming for the reintegration of troops, have been claimed to be 'dead-ends' precisely because the old reintegration strategies have weakened the army, incentivised the taking up of arms and ultimately increased militarisation and reproduced violence (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen 2012).

The DRC response to these two uprisings has been contradictory. On the one hand, encouraged by the UN and the diplomatic community, there have been a series of programmes to integrate Nkunda's troops in the FARDC. On the other hand, the DRC Government has supported the FDLR and Mai Mai groups, especially PARECO and the Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Souverain against Nkunda and Ntaganda, respectively, in an attempt to confront Rwanda's hegemony (UN Group of Experts 2008b: para. 18). As discussed below, this enters into the logic of giving primacy to military means and the assertion of state authority over political negotiations.

#### *Negotiations without commitment*<sup>18</sup>

The second dynamic characterising the 2006–16 decade is flawed political agreements. Negotiations have been sought by all parties, including the diplomatic community, but they have lacked commitment. Particularly notable are the 2007 agreement with the CNDP, the Goma Accords of 2008, the 23 March agreements and the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF). Their focus on demobilisation and the reintegration of armed groups in the FARDC has created a lose-lose scenario. When successful, these agreements have contributed to the mosaic of armed groups which comprise the FARDC and have offered warring parties a privileged standpoint from which to continue pursuing their agendas; when they have been unsuccessful, conflict has erupted again. Additionally, as seen below, negotiations have almost always implied an agreement to use military means, which has increased instability.

In the 2007 negotiations between the DRC government and the CNDP, it was agreed to reintegrate CNDP members into the army under the name of *mixage*,<sup>19</sup> but the outcome was the following:

Nkunda's commanders continued to respond to their own chain of command, meeting regularly in Nkunda's headquarters and launching operations independently [...]. Most importantly, they were put back on the army payroll. With 3,500 declared soldiers at the beginning of *mixage*, Nkunda benefited from over US\$70,000 each month in salaries. (Stearns 2008: 253)<sup>20</sup>

Thus, CNDP consolidated its positions, especially along the border with Rwanda, and caused further violence (Stearns 2008: 254). Two subsequent referent agreements were agreed to as a result. First, the Goma Accords of January 2008 were a comprehensive strategy for reintegration of all armed groups including CNDP, PARECO and several Mai Mai militias. They established the Amani Leo programme in which the Programme de Stabilisation et de Reconstruction des Zones sortant des Conflits Armés (STAREC) came to light, and a series of military operations in which the DRC and Rwanda and the DRC with MONUC/MONUSCO targeted the FDLR and Mai Mai militias. Despite the initial hype about the value of these agreements, by August 2008 the CNDP had withdrawn from the Goma Accords and was threatening to take over Goma. A second agreement was reached on 23 March (the 23 March agreement) as a bilateral agreement between the CNDP and the DRC Government. Similar to the *mixage* process, the 23 March agreement established that CNDP troops would integrate with the FARDC but would not be deployed outside the Kivus, essentially provoking a change of uniforms only (MONUSCO – ISSSS/STAREC liaison Officer 2010; MONUSCO Political Affairs Officer (no. 149) 2010). For Rwanda this meant the fulfilment of important security and economic agendas; for the DRC it was a compromise, encouraged by the diplomatic community, to reinforce state presence in the area.

As already seen in Chapter 1, it was not just the military positions CNDP members were granted; they were also granted oversight over refugees returning to the region. Through the Amani Leo programme, the Permanent Local Committees for Reconciliation were set up to ensure the peaceful return and accommodation of refugees in North and South Kivu. The need for a negotiated approach was due to the fact that the land holdings and even the houses of these refugees may have been redistributed by the customary chief, occupied by the military or the police, sold or taken by an authority (Batenda 2010; UN Habitat representative 2011; Université Catholique de Bukavu Professor 2009). Particularly in North Kivu, negotiations at the grassroots level turned into a geopolitical exercise. This was due to the fact that identification and nomination of refugees is made through the UNHCR/DRC/Rwanda Tripartite Agreement, but is enacted locally. So nominations were largely done by the

CNDP on behalf of the DRC Government. As such, many so-called autochthonous residents of Masisi, as well as of Walikale and Rutshuru, have argued that it is a tactic for settling Rwandan populations in Congo (President of Civil Society Masisi Centre 2011).

Interestingly, residents are not the only ones to have this perception. According to a UNHCR officer, Rwanda is using this strategy to such effect:

The people that want to come into Walikale and Lubero are not Congolese; it is Kigali that dictates that. There is not a lot of population there, so those who live there feel really threatened. There is a lot of space. The strategy is that they allow for those new settlers to come in and compensate them with development projects. We need to do that very slowly. People in Walikale are the people from the hills, with provincial characters, we need to convince them. We need to reduce the dependence of people on the customary chief. We need to give a land title to each of them and create the conditions so that investors can come to bring development. But for that we need to train the customary chief and give him an alternative also. It is a political but also a humanitarian project. It is the only way, otherwise we risk that there is war again. We can put pressure on Rwanda in regards to the FDLR but their policy of establishing themselves in Congo is not possible, they receive 50 per cent of their budget from overseas, but if the West stops their aid, they can always go to China. Rwanda has a de facto occupation of Rutshuru and Masisi, and it is now trying to take Walikale and Lubero because there are a lot of minerals there, we can only try that this is done in a calm and peaceful way. (UNHCR Officer 2010)

Shared authority is fundamental to the practice of deploying state authority. Yet it externalises violent consequences onto the population. The M-23 uprising was a wake-up call to many that a serious peace agreement was needed for the political issues underlying the conflict to be addressed. The failed state thesis and the turn to the local sources of conflict have continued a trend in which Congolese endogenous factors of conflict are the ultimate target of policies. In February 2013, the PSCF was signed by eleven countries (DRC, Angola, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Central African Republic (CAR), Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan and Zambia) with UN, AU, Southern African Development Community and International Conference on the Great Lakes Region representatives as witnesses (Framework Agreement 2013). This agreement recognised the need for greater commitment to peace on the part of the DRC, countries of the broader region and donors. It placed particular responsibilities on each party: the DRC to undertake security sector reform, to consolidate state authority, reforms, development and democratisation; the countries of the region to stop meddling in each other's affairs and stop supporting armed groups; the donors to renew their commitment. This agreement triggered several developments. Significant international pressure from donors was applied on Rwanda to stop financing armed groups in the DRC. Ntaganda surrendered at the US embassy in March 2013 and is currently being tried by the International Criminal Court

(ICC 2015). This was a step forward in comparison to the case of Nkunda, who, despite the indictment the DRC has against him, has lived under house arrest in Rwanda since January 2009. However, there has been limited progress on several fronts. Armed groups continue to operate, an increasing number of ex-M-23 members have been granted amnesty and the democratisation process is currently threatened by an uncertain third round of elections.

A common feature of these agreements, from the Goma Accords to the PSCE, is their reliance on military means. Looked at from the perspective of the challenges the political path has faced, it seems that military means have gathered greater commitment. Yet military operations have created greater insecurity, and armed groups have not been neutralised (Human Rights Watch 2015; UNSG 2015). Agreements have achieved greater militarisation while fuelling conflict.

### *Peace through military means*

The third and final dynamic of the decade after the 2006 elections has been the reliance on military means. For rural populations, military operations and the continuation of armed groups have added to the perception that self-defence militias are the only recourse to achieve security. The continued existence of these militias has justified the need to increase military intervention. Further, political compromises through the negotiations seen above and the lack of means to deploy state administrators have also entailed the deployment of the military (at times ex-armed groups) as a representation of authority. This has increased the reliance on self-defence militias for the purpose of protection both against the military and against other armed groups.

The 2008 Goma Conference formalised a rapprochement between the DRC and Rwanda, encouraging a series of formal military operations against the FDLR backed by MONUC, and giving the operations special powers, funding and immunities. The fact that a military operation was prioritised illustrates a strengthening of statebuilding, but through sharing means of coercion and extraction and informalised governance formulas based on scattering the army across the territory of North and South Kivu.

Between January 2009 and April 2012 three military operations were launched: Umoja Wetu, Kimya II and Amani Leo (Radio Okapi 2012a) (Table 3.1). These operations provoked an outcry. Although they managed to dismantle certain FDLR chains of command and camps, as well as dislodging them from the mine sites they had occupied, they did so with a big toll on civilians (Oxfam International 2009). The FDLR retaliated against the population in areas where the FDLR had set up a parallel administration. The FARDC and the RDE, for their part, engaged in severe human rights abuses in the course of their military action. Several NGOs, local and international, called for their suspension, and some for the demilitarisation of villages (Radio Okapi 2010). The

Table 3.1 Features and achievements of the 2009–11 Goma Accords operations

Name of operation	Dates	Duration	Area of operation	Troops	Success
Umoja Wetu (Our unity)	January 2009	35 days	Meridional North Kivu	FARDC–RDF	500 FDLR dislodged, then relocated
Kimya II (Silence)	March 2009	3 months	South Kivu	FARDC/MONUC	Mai Mai and FDLR attacked
Amani Leo (Peace Today)	January 2010	15 months	STAREC areas	FARDC/MONUC	FDLR substantially touched, leadership in judicial process. Several groups relocated and still operating as allies with Mai Mai militias

Source: ICG (2009, 2010)

popular rejection of these operations led the Government to introduce operation Amani Leo. In the eyes of a commander deployed in South Kivu, the problem with the previous operations was that the population was not involved or consulted (FARDC Colonel (no. 129) 2010).

Nevertheless, with or without popular support, these operations represented one of the backbones of the restoration of state authority. An Amani Leo FARDC operations officer defined the strategy as follows:

It is not about exterminating all FDLR like saying – there is no one FDLR member that breathes – no, that is not possible; what we mean is that in one or two months we can eradicate the FDLR phenomenon, as a military organisation here in our country, with all its capacity to operate, to set up barriers on the roads and get taxes, to continue exploiting the minerals like they want, to have the political control of certain localities. Once eradicated, we can restore state authority all across the country. (Amani Leo Operations Officer 2010)

MONUSCO's founding mandate supports this vision with its goals, including the termination of military groups, support for the Government to better protect the population and support for the restoration of state authority in areas held by armed groups (UN Security Council 2010: 3). The question is whether state authority has indeed been restored or, as seen in Chapter 1, shared or delegated, with coercive and extractive effects externalised onto residents.

During the last few years, and especially since the M-23 uprising, new rounds of operations have been approved, signalling a 'clean slate' policy in regional and international approaches to the DRC conflict. Aside from the political commitments discussed above, the UN Security Council has given the green light on unilateral offensive operations. To this was added the presence of Martin Kobler as the representative of the UN Secretary General in the DRC between 2013 and 2015. A German politician who understands the military means à la Clausewitz, as an extension of the political, Kobler recognised the mechanisms that give way to conflicts of citizenship, identity and land, but firmly believed in the military neutralisation of armed groups. The deployment of over 3,000 troops from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania managed to clear out the M-23 with the Intervention Brigade (IB). The initial hype created with this first round of operations clashes with the overall picture of instability (Vogel 2014b).

The conclusion that is derived from the over 20 years of conflict is that a truly engaged political process has yet to be seen. Without it, conflict keeps erupting and military means are prevalent. After the last major crisis, different national, regional and international actors seem to have renewed their commitment to more serious solutions, tackling the conflict on several levels. Yet the everyday life of the rural classes has not changed substantially. The proxy wars between the DRC and Rwanda, their mutual instrumentalisation, the reliance on the military to assert state authority in a political context that has an important democratic and development deficit have only entrenched the conflict. Peacebuilding strategies, however, have not been external to these processes.

### **The UN and the contradictions of peacebuilding**

The UN's peacebuilding strategies in the DRC are more reflective of the evolution of frameworks for conflict resolution than of the actual evolution of the conflict. Having been reluctant to intervene for a number of years, the UN turned the DRC into one of the first 'laboratories' for *post-conflict* statebuilding (Zeebroek 2008). After the more significant deployment of UN peacekeeping forces in 2001, the two missions – MONUC (until 2010) and MONUSCO (from 2010) – have been the epicentres of international peacebuilding in the DRC. Although the UN declared the DRC a threat to international peace and security in order to justify its intervention, a late and controversial arms embargo and a lack of response to a war of aggression against a member state were evidence that the image of Zaire/DRC as a failed state had become the guidance for action (UN Security Council 1996; 1999; 2003).<sup>21</sup> The UN's actions have been contradictory. Its main priorities of civilian protection and the reconstruction of state authority have been compromised by improvised and experimental approaches. Further, its role has been instrumentalised and 'marginalised' by member states in the pursuit of side agendas.<sup>22</sup>

The priorities of civilian protection and reconstitution of state authority are seen in both MONUC and MONUSCO landmark resolutions (UN Security Council 1999, 2000, 2010). The weight and responsibilities of MONUC/MONUSCO have consistently grown, making it one of the largest missions in UN history. Its tasks include civil administration reform, democracy promotion, civil society capacity-building, demobilisation (DDR(RR)) and SSR. MONUC helped to maintain the integrity of the DRC and was a major actor behind the democratic elections of 2006. MONUC/MONUSCO has been, in many instances, the sole guardian of peace and security in parts of the Kivus. However, its impact remains limited. The graphs in figures 3.1–3.4 illustrate how the DRC ranks highly on the list of UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) deployments in terms of

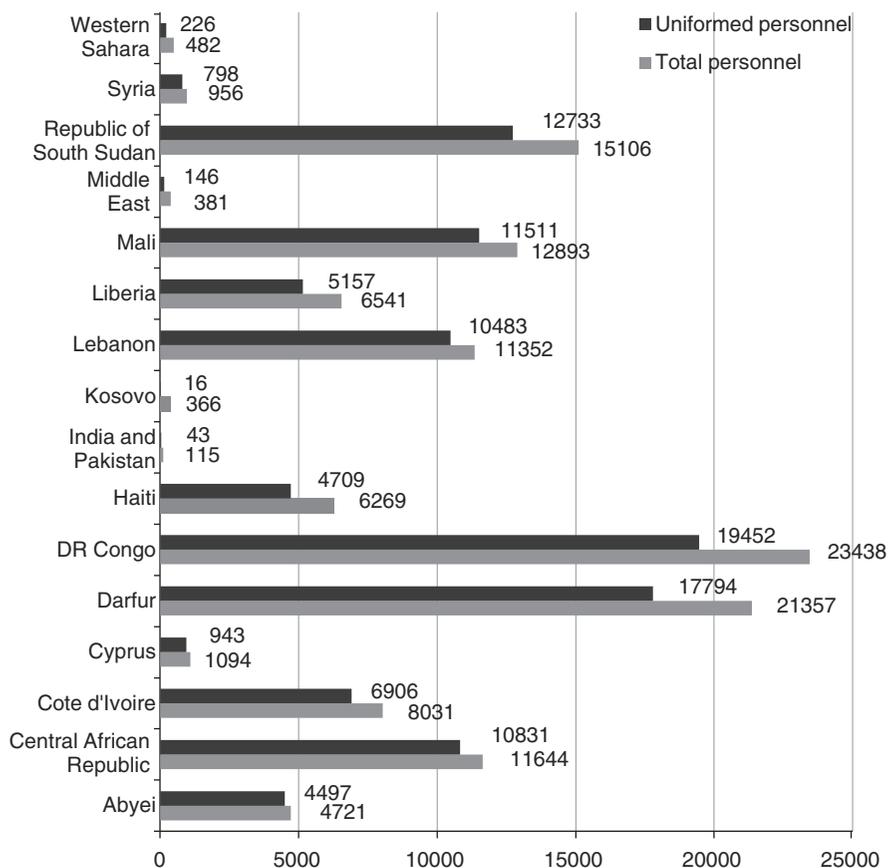


Figure 3.1 DPKO uniformed and total personnel

personnel, military deployment and budget. Yet, when taking other aspects into account and, in comparison to other missions, the patchy, contradictory and multidimensional character of peacebuilding is revealed.

Englebert and Tull's figures represent a period in which the war was coming to an end. Yet, when compared with other missions, they continue to show a relative commitment. In 2016 the UN spent an average of \$17.9 per year per capita in the DRC in comparison to \$22.23 in Kosovo, \$91.15 in South Sudan and \$111.3 in Lebanon.<sup>23</sup> Even at the peak of the conflict, between 1998 and 2003, the DRC did not rank highly in the amount garnered by the Office for the

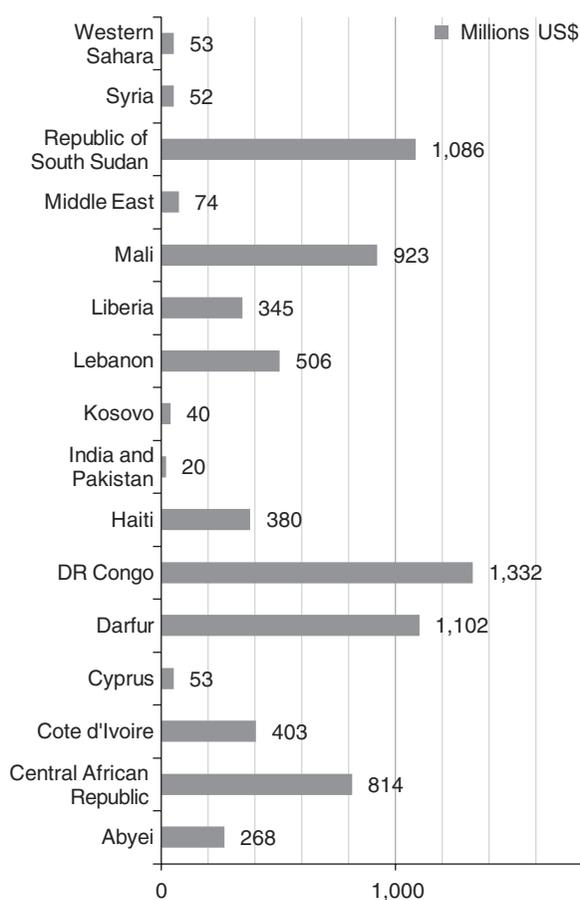


Figure 3.2 DPKO budget by mission  
Source: DPKO (2016)

Everyday resistance, peacebuilding and state-making

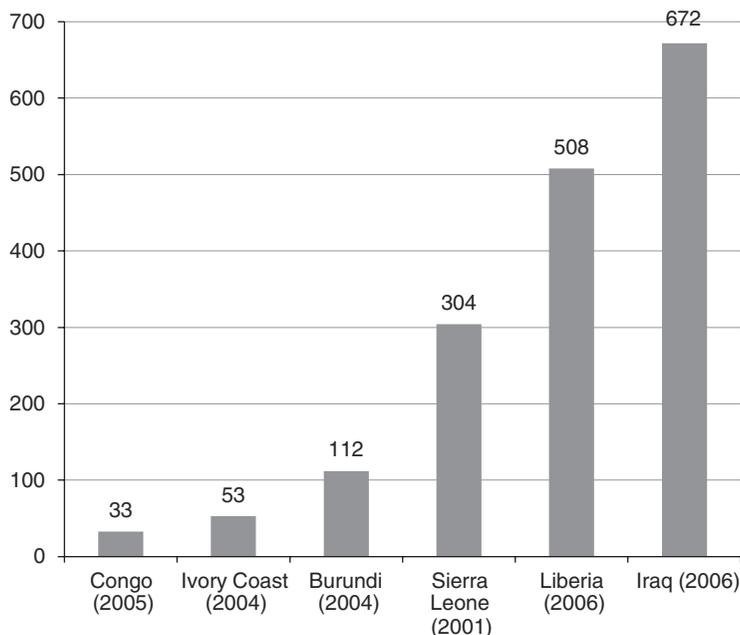


Figure 3.3 Peacekeepers/100,000 people  
Source: Englebert and Tull (2008: 130–1)

Table 3.2 Comparison of private contributions to OCHA appeals

DRC	Great Lakes	SE Europe	East Timor	Afghanistan	Iraq
January 1999–June 2003 (millions of US dollars)					
1.4	0.5	77.2	2.7	65.4	10.3
Total humanitarian assistance, January 1999–June 2003 (millions of US dollars)					
349	574	1,493	180	1,741	1,044

Source: Hawkins (2004)

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) appeals for humanitarian assistance (Table 3.2).

The disparities between needs, goals and actual funding reflect the political nature of aid.<sup>24</sup> What is relevant is that the agenda of social and political transformation stemming from the definition of the DRC state as *non-existent*, where statebuilders start ‘from scratch’, is contradictory to some donor agendas (MONUC Political Affairs Officer (no. 7) 2009). A complex political environment and long-term objectives also largely exceed the resources at hand. This has

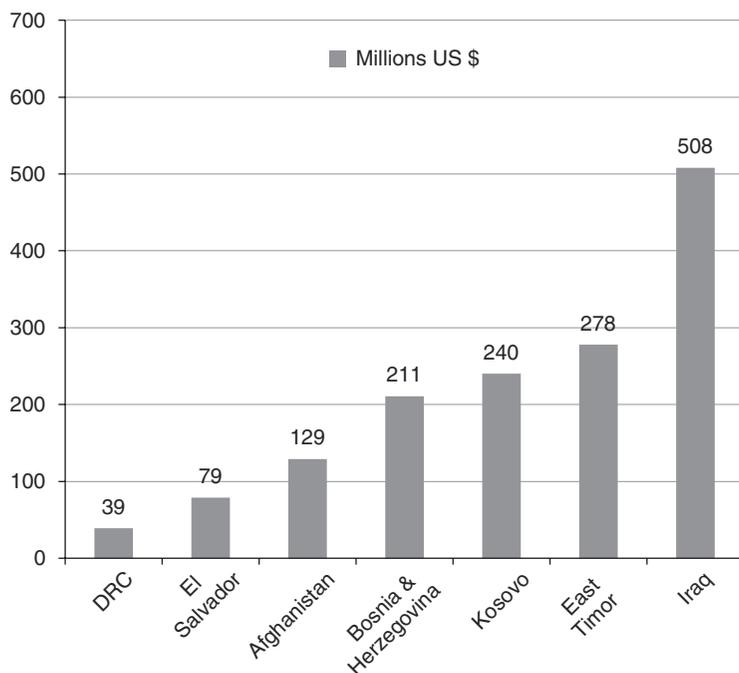


Figure 3.4 Reconstruction budget 2004  
Source: Englebert and Tull (2008: 130)

been noted in the shortcomings of civilian protection and state authority reconstruction. Despite the large deployment of peacekeepers and despite being authorised to use force, MONUC/MONUSCO only started military operations in conjunction with the FARDC in 2005. Until the authorisation of the IB in 2013, it only once launched an operation autonomously, in September 2010 (UN Security Council 2013; Zeebroek 2008: 9).<sup>25</sup> Although the DRC Government has the primary responsibility for providing security to its citizens, there have been particular situations where MONUC/MONUSCO has been seen as directly responsible for failing to provide civilian protection. In 2004, MONUC failed to stop the aforementioned attacks in Bukavu, which lasted for one week. In 2008, the Kiwanja massacre entailed the killing of 67 people 3 km away from the MONUC military camp (UN Joint Human Rights Office 2009: 3). For several weeks in 2010, at a location just over 32 km from the MONUSCO base, a coalition of Mai Mai Cheka and FDLR combatants committed 387 rapes, mostly of women but also of men, girls and boys, in addition to other forms of torture and abuse (UN Joint Human Rights Office 2011: 4). In 2014, a massacre in

Mutarule, in South Kivu, resulting in the deaths of 34 people and injuries to 25 more, was ignored until two days later, 'despite repeated requests for assistance' (Human Rights Watch 2014; UN Group of Experts 2015a; para. 140). The fact that peacekeepers obey their own countries' rules of engagement makes them subject to the risk that each country wants to expose its soldiers to (Amani Leo Operations Officer 2010; FARDC General (no. 146) 2010; Informal Conversation with Pakistani Battalion Blue Helmet, Bukavu 2010; MONUSCO Political Affairs Officer (no. 63) 2010). Even so, failure to respond in these situations is linked to the UN's strategy of not engaging except when in support of the DRC Government or against specific armed groups.

The aim of reconstructing state authority has seen the UN and donors entering the same logic of informal politics that they were trying to tackle. Ever since its first deployment, MONUC has prioritised strategies which are conducive to the formation of government and the restructuring of the security sector. This has relied on power-sharing agreements between the warring parties, which has not only given an incentive to take up arms but also created a contradiction to the aims of fostering peace and promoting democracy (Barrios and Ahamed 2010; Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2009: 474). As declared by the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Heile Menkeros: 'MONUC [is] buying peace' (cited in Alden, Thakur, and Arnold 2011: 125). This is not just a matter of asserting trade-offs in a difficult political process, but one of articulating the contradictory relationship that state-making has with peace. The UN has been instrumental in providing legitimacy and, to some extent, logistics to articulate patchy formulas of informal and shared authority with neighbouring states and through the military. The result has been the creation of new sources of violence. From different positions, Verhogen, Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers illustrate how peacebuilding has relied on forms of privatised governance, which have been constitutive of structural violence dynamics, ultimately producing and reproducing sources of insecurity (Verhoeven 2009: 406; Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2009: 484). For Trefon this is due to peacebuilding in the DRC being a strategy of 'mismanagement, hypocrisy, powerlessness and sabotage' (2011: ix). Reform and aid strategies, both intentionally and unintentionally, either fail or reproduce the problems they were trying to solve (Trefon 2011: 9). This is facilitated by a culture of secrecy and impunity and a climate of mutual instrumentalisation and competition between national and international actors (Trefon 2011: 14–18).

State-making and peacebuilding as seen in the actions of MONUC/MONUSCO are contradictory: there is a disconnect between aims and funding and the conflicting agendas of member states. This has been further challenged by the fact that processes and certain policies for building state authority have themselves been contradictory to other priorities such as civilian protection and peacebuilding. The fact that the main sources of legitimate authority for

intervention rely on these priorities, yet are also its main shortcomings, points to deeper incoherencies in the nature of the processes.

### **Militarisation, plural authority and extraction: the context of resistance**

Africa's World War could be seen as a series of violent conflicts that started with a coup against Mobutu orchestrated by a multi-state coalition and joined by a popular revolt. What followed was an even greater multi-state war which has continued, after a violent peace transition, with a series of cyclical conflicts until today. These latter conflicts are the result of the continuous desire by popular classes for change; of changes and continuities in the security, political and economic interests of different countries in the region and their allies; and of the specific local dynamics around land, resources, political participation and commercial networks that were in place before the war but which have been exacerbated and crystallised through the war. During these periods, war and state-making have been determinants for the militarisation of the environment. This explains that the nature of resistance has been violent as well as covert. The plurality of new authorities, elites and alliances that has been forged across ideological and ethnic lines has fragmented both rule and resistance. The context has been marked by the use of violence in the pursuit of state security and economic agendas, even if through proxy armed groups. Resistance, as we will see, is not an anti-state or an anti-war movement but, rather, a negation, or at least a mitigation, of the everyday context of domination. Analyses of the sources of conflict tend to see the conflict as stemming from the particular dynamics of the DRC. This not only detaches the DRC from its history, it evades the interconnection of global political and economic dynamics. These are particularly important in understanding the conflict in its full political scope.

Throughout the whole period, multiple actors, including the UN, have fostered governance arrangements that have not always led to the creation of state authority or provided civilian protection. Although the UN has at times played a secondary role to donor countries' agendas, an examination of its policies illustrates that having statebuilding as a primary peacebuilding strategy has not only missed important dynamics of conflict but has also fostered violence inherent in the state-making process. An increasing reliance on military means, despite political agreements, has undermined these agreements, fuelled militarised resistance and exacerbated the dynamics of authoritarian militarised state power that is at the root of many current problems. An important implication of these multiple periods of conflict is that alongside multiple wars there are multiple statebuilding agendas. These have been mutually reinforcing, but also mutually undermining. In the DRC, war does not necessarily make the state, nor is the state the only actor in war; war has been seen as a useful and effective tool to pursue certain state agendas. Rather than centralising state

power and military power, wars have acted primarily against the population. They have left, at times, a scattered presence of military authority and have forced state and non-state actors to form contingent alliances. Although this is part of a continuing process, the dynamic of fostering informal governance arrangements has generated a cohabited context of citizens and military, exposing the inextricable relationships between war, state-making and resistance.

#### NOTES

- 1 For an overview of academic debates see: (Autesserre 2012a; Cuvelier, Vlassenroot, and Olin 2014; Turner 2007 Ch. 1).
- 2 Its latest mandate was extended until August 2016 (UN Security Council 2015).
- 3 A more general overview can be found in Pugh (2005); Williams (2008); World Bank (1997; 2007; 2012a).
- 4 E.g., ex-Minister Katumba Mwanke and Banro (UN Panel of Experts 2001: Annex II, p. 2 and Annex III, p. 7).
- 5 See, for instance, other sources for the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Mai Mai Yakotumba and Raia Mutomboki in Stearns et al. (2013: 40–41); UN Group of Experts (2015a: para. 15; p. 25–38, 115).
- 6 See the debate about the rigidity of ethnic identities in Appiah (2001); Chandra (2006); Horowitz (2000).
- 7 An emphasis on regional actors is seen in Braeckman (2003). An emphasis on internal factors is seen in Lemarchand (2003); Prunier (2009); Turner (2007).
- 8 Etienne Tshisekedi of the UDPS was elected prime minister, though overthrown by Mobutu three months later (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002: 195).
- 9 Lanotte notes how, by the mid-1990s, rebel groups from Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and, to lesser extent, the CAR and Zimbabwe had refuge in or directly fought in the DRC, e.g., UNITA against Angola; the ADF, the Lord's Resistance Army and the West Bank Nile Front against Museveni; and Sudan was raiding John Garang's rebel posts from northern Zaire (Lanotte 2003: 36).
- 10 Kabila, a historical nationalist leader who fought at the time of independence, formed part of Lumumba's cabinet and joined Pierre Mulele in one of the most serious uprisings against Mobutu (M'Bokolo 1980: 157).
- 11 See battle deaths in Roberts (2001: 159). For the debate on war-related deaths see: Coghlan et al. (2007); Human Security Research Group (2009, esp. Ch. 7); Stewart (2009). For the debate on the figures see: Human Security Research Group (2010); IRC and Burnet Institute (2010).
- 12 The DRC has one of the largest numbers of IDPs and refugees in the world (UNHCR – Democratic Republic of the Congo 2012a).
- 13 Kabila was shot by Rachidi Kasereka, one of his bodyguards. However, the real hand behind this murder is still discussed, not least because Kabila had created many enemies. Some strong theses point to the murder being attributable to Angola, some others point to more direct involvement of the US, inaugurating a period of more intense Western intervention.
- 14 Commission politique (RCD); Commission économique et financière (MLC); Commission pour la reconstruction et le développement (Gouvernement); Commission sociale et culturelle (Opposition and some Mai Mai groups) (Sun City Agreement 2002: Art. 1.c).

## *History and present of 'Africa's World War'*

- 15 Unless noted, general information in this and subsequent paragraphs in this section relies on Stearns (2008, 2012a); UN Group of Experts (2010b; 2012a; 2012b).
- 16 There has been debate as to whether they were the same movement or not. However, all official communiqués are signed as CNDP–M-23 (M23 2012). Jason Stearns argues that their leadership, funding and positions, especially in Masisi and Rutshuru, make them the same, with the M-23 having less social support than the CNDP in its heyday (Stearns 2012a: 48).
- 17 The UNHCR noted that there had been 650,000 new displaced since the beginning of 2012 and that its partners had reported extra-judicial killings and pillage (UNHCR – Democratic Republic of the Congo 2012b). Kabila's statement: Digital Congo (2012).
- 18 For the background and text of the agreements this section relies on Minani Bihuzo (2008).
- 19 *Mixage* is a process of demobilisation and reintegration in the army without redeployment. Troops are allowed to remain in their area but are mixed up with FARDC.
- 20 It is noteworthy that Jason Stearns was the coordinator of the Group of Experts on the Arms Embargo at the time.
- 21 Calls for action were based on the nature of Zaire as a failed state and not on the nature of the conflict (Kiwanuka 1996). Herman Cohen, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs at the time, stated that 'To say that [Congo-Kinshasa] has a government today would be a gross exaggeration' (cited in Young 2002: 24).
- 22 Trefon (2011) speaks of mutual instrumentalisations of national and international actors. Stearns (2012a: 63) argues that the UN has been 'politically marginalised' since 2006.
- 23 Calculations were made from the following: budget figures (DPKO 2016); total population per country, except for Kosovo (World Bank 2016); for Kosovo (UN Population Fund 2013).
- 24 These disparities reflect the intersecting political agendas of interveners and the challenges of coordination between different UN agencies, donors and aid agencies. These are widely researched issues. In relation to the DRC see: Pouligny (2006); Trefon (2011). Some of these issues have been addressed by MONUC/MONUSCO with its status as an integrated mission, which means 'to have a clear chain of command and central decision-making authority from which all UN country-activities can be coordinated' (Hänggi and Scherrer 2008: 8).
- 25 In September 2010 MONUSCO launched a unitary operation called Shop Window against the FDLR for the first time (OCHA information meeting, Kinshasa 2010).